

POLITICAL CANVASSING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PARTY POLITICS IN NIGERIA

NWOKOCHA Chiwetara Gloria

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management
Rivers State University Port Harcourt

ADIELE Kenneth C.

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management
Rivers State University Port Harcourt

Abstract

This study examined effect of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria. The study used political canvassing unidimensionally, and used voting, party membership and campaign involvement to represent citizen participation. The study adopted an explanatory research design. The population of the study comprised 93, 469, 008 registered voters in Nigeria. The proportionate sampling procedure was used to generate a sample size of 384 voters from the six geopolitical zones across Nigeria. The study collected primary data using questionnaire whose validity and reliability was ascertained via the exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability respectively. The study tested three hypotheses where using simple regression with the help of statistical package for social sciences version 22.0. The study found that political canvassing has positive and significant influence on measures of citizen participation (voting, party membership and campaign involvement). Thus, the study concluded that political canvassing significantly influence citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria; and recommends that political parties and electoral bodies in Nigeria should adopt political canvassing to encourage citizen participation by voting, becoming a party member and been involved in campaign process.

Keywords: Campaign involvement, citizen participation, party membership, political canvassing, voting

Introduction

Nigeria is a multicultural society with over 300 tribes and 500 languages in 6 geopolitical zones, whose political leanings take religious, ethnic and cultural lines. (African Skies, 2023; Vanguard, 2017). As at 2022, about 54 per cent of Nigeria's population live in cities. This should ordinarily result in increased citizen participation in elections (The World Bank, 2022a). However, Nigerians' aversion to citizen participation (particularly voting during elections), is well documented.

In the build-up to the 2023 general elections, a combination of severe cash crunch and protracted scarcity of petrol ensued, and Nigerians, particularly youths, picked strong interest in participating in the election. However, the voter turnout was abysmal - the lowest since Nigeria's independence (Premium Times, 2023a). In 36 states, less than half of the eligible population turned out to vote, and no state had a turnout above 40 per cent (Premium Times, 2023a).

Overall, the national turnout was 29 per cent - no election had a lower participation rate in the six decades of Nigeria's independence. Additionally, out of the 93.4 million registered voters in the year 2023, only 87.2 million people collected their Permanent Voters Cards and the total number of actual voters on Election Day was only 24.9 million. Barely 9 million people voted for the President that is today, governing about 220 million Nigerians.

The problem of poor citizen participation and low turnouts in Nigeria's elections have been attributed to several factors including voter apathy, poor economic situation, low campaign involvement, lack of party membership etc. In order to solve the problems of citizen participation and voter turnout in Nigerian politics, there is need to understand the concept of political canvassing, which involves direct outreach to voters by political institutions and candidates, playing a crucial role in shaping citizens participation in Elections.

In Nigeria, the level of political engagement among citizens often fluctuate due to diverse factors, including political disillusionment, socioeconomic challenges and distrust in political parties/institutions. However, effective political canvassing can bridge these gaps by increasing awareness about political issues, motivating citizens to vote as well as foster a sense of inclusion in the political decision making process.

According to Blumenherst (2023), political canvassing is an essential tool used to promote democratic participation by creating direct lines of communication between political parties, candidates and the electorate. Where the political environment is shaped by multifarious factors such as ethnicity, religion, economic inequality and regionalism, political canvassing is used to foster political engagement (Kreiss, 2016).

Political participation in Nigeria is associated with mixed interest for democracy and apathy driven by dissatisfaction with governance and political elites. Political canvassing mitigate voter apathy by making political issues more accessible and by directly engaging with communities. Studies have shown that personal contact between candidates or party representatives and voters significantly increase voter turnout and interest in political matters (Gerber & Green, 2000).

In Nigeria, where voter turnout has been in decline, especially since the 2015 general elections, effective canvassing can be a key strategy to reverse in citizen participation. For instance, the voter turnout in 2019 election showed 35%, the lowest since the return of democratic rule in 1999 signaling a need for strategy that can reinvigorate citizen participation (INEC, 2019). Hence, this study nexus the effect of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria.

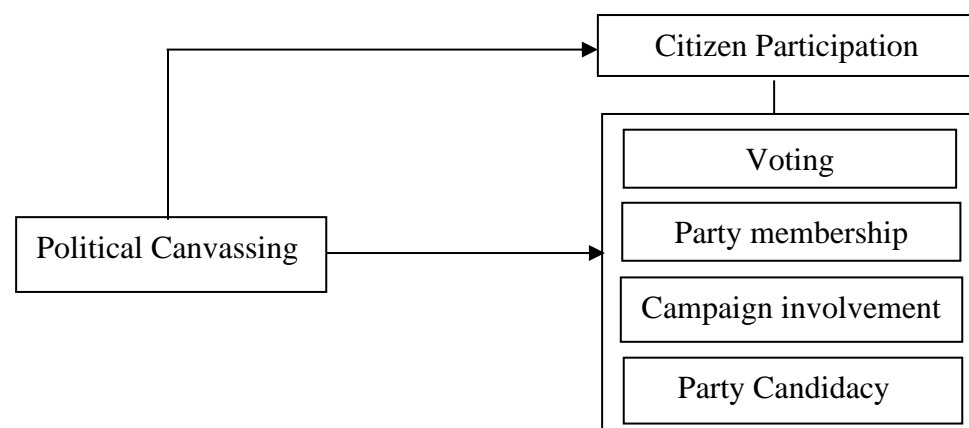


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of effect of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria.

Theoretical Foundation

This study was underpinned by standard model theory that was pioneered in the field of political science and sociology; and which discusses political participation of citizens, political behaviour, civic engagement, and standard model of political participation (Verba, 2007; Schlozman, 1999; Brady, 2009). Standard model theory serves as a foundational framework for understanding the dynamics of citizen engagement in democratic societies.

At its core, standard model theory posits that individual-level political behaviour is influenced by socio-demographic factors, psychological predispositions, and contextual variables (Verba et al., 1995). These factors interact to shape individuals' perceptions of political efficacy, sense of civic duty, and opportunities and constraints they face in engaging with the political system. In the standard model, education is a direct cause of political participation (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2021).

Additionally, standard model recognizes the importance of contextual variables, such as social networks, institutional structures, and cultural norms, in shaping political behaviour (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Summarily, standard model theory provides a theoretical framework that enhance understanding of how political canvassing influence citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria because it indicates how individual-level factors, contextual variables and structural inequalities promote democratic engagement.

Concepts of political canvassing

Political canvassing is the act of surveying voters in a given political district to ask about their voting plans in an upcoming election. Blumenherst (2023) defined political canvassing as an awareness-building and information gathering strategy launched to inform voters about upcoming elections, convince undecided voters to support a specific candidate, encourage voter registration, and mobilize supportive voters to get out and vote

Political parties utilize various marketing communication strategies such as canvassing that includes door-to-door visits, phone calls, mailers, and digital outreach to establish personal contact with current and potential voters, and deliver target messages (Green & Gerber, 2015; Nickerson, 2006). Effective political canvassing involves a range of techniques and approaches designed to engage voters, identify supporters and mobilize turnout, which include script-based conversations, persuasion tactics, voter registration assistance, and data collection efforts (Panagopoulos, 2011).

In politics, canvassing is a key communication strategy used to improve citizen participation. It works by systematically initiating direct contact with individuals, especially during political campaigns (Cavaliere et al., 2021; Issenberg, 2012). This implies that political canvassing helps to establish one-on-one connections with voters (Broockman & Green, 2014). Political canvassing uses various media such as direct mail, publications, television, radio and computer network to connect with citizens (Amri, 2021; Yilmaz & Bhatti, 2017).

Advances in technology has transformed political canvassing by enabling political parties to leverage digital tools and platforms for more targeted outreach (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2013). Mobile apps, voter databases, predictive analytics and geospatial mapping software facilitate

canvass planning, data management, and real-time tracking of field activities (Kreiss, 2016; Hersh, 2015).

Citizen participation

Citizen participation refers to voluntary activities undertaken by citizens to influence public policy that directly affects selection of persons who make policies (Carole, 2015). It covers a wide range of activities such as voting, party candidacy, party membership, holding a political position and donating to, and campaign involvements (Timeyin, 2023).

According to Christian (2023), citizen participations help government better understand what citizens want and adequately fulfilling its duties to the ordinary man, thereby affecting the community. Apart from being an initiative ensuring that government adequately fulfils its duties, diverse forms of citizen participation also give ordinary people an opportunity to impact their community (Timeyin, 2023).

The most prominent example of citizen participation is voting, where citizens vote for representatives they believe will advocate for their needs in local, state, or federal political spheres. Christian (2023) opined that voting is not the only way citizens participate in political process, they can also contact public officials to give their opinion about a pressing political or social issue, relay their preferences to officials in public forums like town halls or during debates and run for office themselves.

Aaron et al. (2021) identify conventional and unconventional participation as different types of citizen participation. Conventional participation refers to traditional and constitutionally guaranteed activities essential to the continuation of democratic process, including voting, party membership, campaign involvement and party candidacy. Unconventional participation on the other hand, describes controversial or offensive activities that allow citizens to register their displeasure about issues, including civil disobedience boycotts and sit-ins (Timeyin, 2023).

Despite differences in method, conventional and unconventional citizen participation present outlets for passionate citizens to engage with, and influence the political process. In this study, we looked at citizen participation from the conventional hence the measures of citizen participation in this study are voting, party membership, campaign involvement and party candidacy.

Voting

Voting is an expression of choice through ballot cast for a political party or a candidate, made by citizens in an election. Lau et al. (2018) define voting as a process by which individuals express their choices or preferences in decision-making, typically within a democratic system. It is a fundamental mechanism for citizens to participate in selecting representatives, shaping policies or determining outcomes on various issues.

Morris (2018) opined that voting takes different forms such as in-person voting at polling stations, absentee ballots or online voting in some jurisdictions. With advancement in voting methods and citizen participation, debates continue around ensuring accessibility, security and transparency of the voting process. Morris (2018) discussed voting with respect to sociological and social-psychological models, arguing that citizens choose their preferred candidate based on long-term

factors such as party identification and enduring group loyalties, as well as ephemeral influences such as candidate qualities and issues (Steg et al., 2021).

In mass elections one would expect the probability of affecting the outcome to be so small that the slight costs of voting (time, effort, travel costs, etc.) normally will outweigh the expected benefits of doing so. Rational citizens realize that the consequence of near universal abstention would be the destruction of democracy (Martin et al., 2019). Scholars suggested that most individuals adopt decision strategies that use only a small number of possible decision criteria when making their choice as voters, others are party voters, and yet another set of people focus on the characteristics of candidates as people (Taylor, 2022; Kozhevnikov, 2007).

Voter turnout in Nigerian elections appears to be capricious over time across different types of election witness different levels of participation (Ibeanu, 2015). Competitiveness of the election, perception of electoral integrity, and effectiveness of voter mobilization efforts are factor that determine voter turnout (Omotola, 2018). Others are socio-demographic and socio-economic factors (Salisu, 2018). Political party affiliation, candidate appeal, and perceptions of the electoral process's fairness and legitimacy, also influence voter turnout (Omotola, 2018; Onuoha, 2016).

Party membership

Party membership has evolved with a shift from traditional mass party model where grassroots members had significant influence towards cartel parties that rely more on state resources and less on active membership for survival (Allern et al., 2016). Party membership is a formal association with political party, often characterized by active participation, financial support and adherence to party ideology that goes beyond voting for a party but involves commitment to party activities including, canvassing, attending meeting and influencing party policies (Hayath, 2023).

Party membership transcend supporting a party candidate. It involve deeper engagement with party structure. Achury et al. (2020) identify two types of party membership: mass member and cartel members. Mass members are ordinary members that have significant role while cartel members are mostly elites that take part, and often dominate party politics.

Gauja and Kosiara-Pedersen (2021) opined that party membership connects to broader social groups and networks, where individuals join parties based on class, ethnicity or community affiliation. Scarrow (2015) pointed out that formal party membership is decreasing in many countries as new forms of participation are emerging such as online activism and supporter networks that blur the traditional boundaries of party membership.

Party membership is a key indicator of citizens' engagement with the political process and their alignment with particular political ideologies and agenda. There are factors that determine party membership across developing and developed nation. These include electoral competition, party organization, leadership appeal and socio-economic dynamics (Abdullahi, 2018). Omotola, (2017) suggested that the pattern of party affiliation among Nigerians is shaped by ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status and regional identity. Many Nigerians join political parties based community ties, personal connections with party leaders, or perceived benefits such as access to patronage and political opportunities (Kalu, 2019).

Campaign involvement

Campaign involvement represents active participation of individuals or groups in political movements to influence electoral outcomes. Jimmy (2022) define campaign involvement as electoral operations, by which communities elect representatives or referenda are decided. Campaign involvement range from volunteering, canvassing and organizing events to financial contributions, strategic planning and online activism.

Unger (2014) stated that campaign involvement begins with grassroot activities where volunteers engage in door-to-door canvassing and distributing literature. Campaign involvement allow candidates and political parties to prepare and present their ideas and positions on issues to the voters in the period preceding Election Day. Gerber and Green (2000) highlighted positive effects of personal contact in mobilizing voters, showing that direct canvassing is one of the most effective methods to increase turnout.

Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) illustrates that social media platforms are often used to reshape the way people get involved in political campaigns, and build political movement as seen in the 2023 general election in Nigeria, which effectively used online platforms to mobilize supporters (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2023). Another form of campaign involvement is financial contributions towards the election of preferred candidates of political parties (Van Erkel et al., 2020).

Campaign involvement is a fundamental aspect of democratic engagement, reflecting citizens' participations in the electoral process and their support for specific candidates or parties. Campaign involvement in Nigeria encompass a wide range of activities, including attending rallies, volunteering for campaign activities, canvassing voters, displaying political materials, and engaging in online advocacy (Omotola, 2018; Akindele & Nwagwu, 2017; Adebayo, 2016).

Political Canvassing and Citizen Participation

Elis et al. (2024) compared the mobilizing effects of in person canvassing to postal reminders. The study found that those in treated home visit group were more likely to take part in all stages of political canvassing. It was also revealed that cost applied are higher than conventional postal reminders, home visit might be a useful strategy for cases in which increasing the response rate is an important goal, given a fixed, small number of potential respondents.

Similarly, Cantoni and Pons (2020) carried out a study to ascertain the possibility of increasing voter support through interactions in Italy. The study tested whether politicians could use direct contact to reconnect with citizens, increase turnout, and win votes. The study randomly assigned 26,000 voters to receive visits from city council candidates, canvassers supporting the candidates' list, or to a control group. While canvassers' visits increased turnout by 1.8 percentage points, candidates' had no impact on participation. Candidates increased their own vote share in the precincts they canvassed. This suggests that their failure to mobilize nonvoters resulted from focusing on securing the preferences of active voters.

Nyman (2017) examined the effect of door-to-door canvassing in the European elections with evidence from a Swedish field experiment. The study presented results from a door-to-door canvassing experiment conducted in Sweden during the 2014 European elections. The study

showed that probability of voting by individuals visited by canvassers increased by 3.6 per cent. This finding aligns with results of Yılmaz and Bhatti (2017) who found that a significant and positive relationship between direct marketing strategies and consumers' purchasing decision in cosmetic sector in Turkey. Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested.

H₀₁: Political canvassing does not significantly influence voting in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Political canvassing does not significantly influence party membership in Nigeria.

H₀₃: Political canvassing does not significantly influence campaign involvement in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a positivist paradigm, a quantitative methodology and an explanatory research design. The population of the study comprised Ninety-three Million, Four Hundred and Sixty-nine Thousand, and Eight (93, 469, 008) registered voters in the 36 States of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) as enlisted by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) (2023).

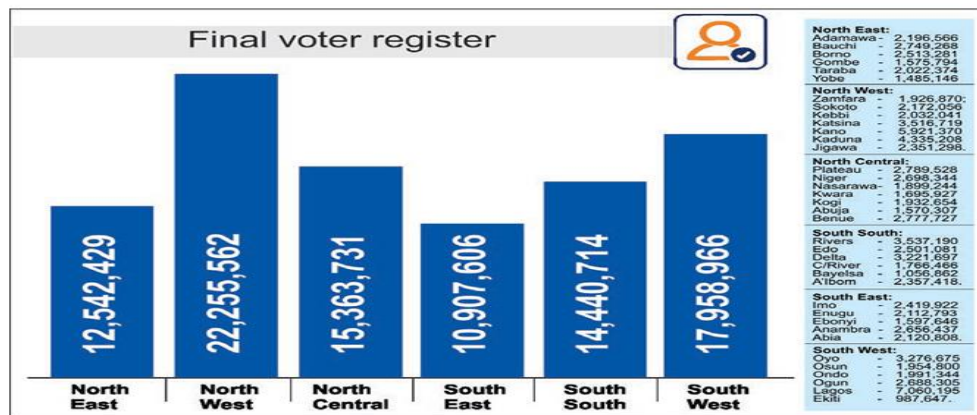


Fig. 1: List of voters across Nigeria

Source: INEC (2023). *INEC final list*. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/inec-final-list-north-west-swest-top-93-million-voter-register/>

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table for sample size determination was used to determine a sample size of 384 voters, while probability sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample elements. The study collected primary data using structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test with a threshold of 0.70 set by Nunally (1978); while Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to determine its validity. Table 1 provides a summary of the test results.

Table 1: Reliability Test and validity test

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients	Factor Loadings
1	Political Canvassing	4	0.873	0.899
2	Voting	4	0.764	0.743
3	Party Membership	4	0.788	0.871
4	Campaign Involvement	4	0.703	0.870

Source: SPSS Output form field data

As shown in Table 1, all the variables have Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients that is above 0.700 and high factor loadings greater than 0.4, indicating that the items and variables in the questionnaire measured what they were supposed to measure. These loadings indicated that there is no cross loading hence there is discriminant validity.

Data generated from 367 valid responses was used in the final analyses of the study. The simple regression was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. The use of simple regression was based on the results of normality test, which showed that the data generated from respondents was normally distributed. Fig. 2 and 3 provides a snapshot of the results of the normality test.

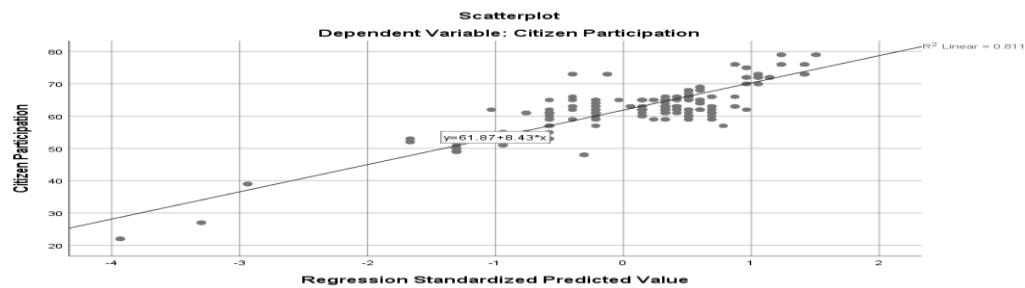


Fig. 2: Scatterplot of distribution of data on influence of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria.

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

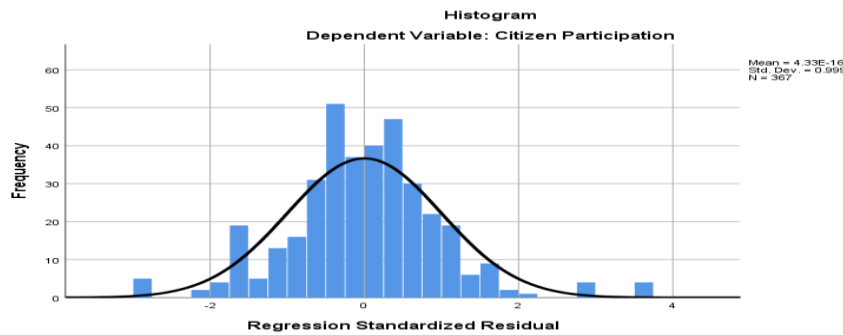


Fig. 3: Histogram of distribution of data on influence of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria.

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The statistical package for social sciences version 22.0 aided the tests. To ascertain the impact of political canvassing on voting, party membership and campaign involvement, categorization scheme of Dun (2001) (see Table 2) which suggests the degree and direction of impacts of a predictor variables on a criterion variables was relied upon.

Table 2: Degree and direction of impacts of predictor variables on the criterion variables

Range of r values	Description
± 0.80 to 1.00	Very Strong
± 0.60 to 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 to 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 to 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 to 0.19	Very Weak

Source: Dun (2001).

The decision rule adopted in the study was to reject or accept the hypotheses is based on the relationship between the critical value (i.e. 0.05) and the probability value of results. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected when and where the probability value < 0.05 ; and accepted when and where the probability value > 0.05 .

Data Analysis and Results

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Political Canvassing in Nigeria

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Political parties and candidates use door-to-door visits, phone calls, mailers, and digital outreach to reach members of the public.	367	1508	4.11	.562	.316
Political parties use script-based conversations, persuasion tactics, voter registration assistance, and data collection efforts to engage voters and gain their support.	367	1390	3.79	1.239	1.534
Political parties use voter data, including demographic information, voting history, and issue preferences, to identify swing voters, undecided voters, and supporters likely to turn out on Election Day.	367	1430	3.90	1.263	1.596
Political parties and candidates employ mobile apps, voter databases, predictive analytics, and geospatial mapping software to facilitate canvass planning, data management, and real-time tracking of field activities.	367	1399	3.81	1.233	1.519
Valid N (listwise)	367				

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3 shows the statistics of responses to items on the study instrument. Item 1 which sought to ascertain the extent to which ‘political parties and candidates use door-to-door visits, phone calls, mailers, and digital outreach to reach members of the public’ has the highest sum (1508), and highest mean score (4.11). However, item 3 has the highest standard deviation and variance of 1.263 and 1.596 respectively, which means item 3 has the most data variations. The results indicate that political canvassing is a veritable tool in party politics in Nigeria.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on rate of Voting in Nigeria

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
You actively participate in politics.	367	1231	3.35	1.522	2.317
You are willing to partake in national state and elections.	367	1286	3.50	1.055	1.114
You are willing to process information about political parties in order to support them.	367	1402	3.82	.947	.897
You are willing to vote in an election.	367	1464	3.99	.618	.382
Valid N (listwise)	367				

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4 shows that question 4 which sought to ascertain the extent to which eligible voters in Nigeria ‘are willing to vote in an election’ has the highest sum - which is 1464, and hence the highest mean score of 3.99. However, question 1 has the highest standard deviation and variance of 1.522 and 2.317 respectively. This implies that question 1 has the most data variations. This result shows that the rate of Voting in Nigeria is high.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of party membership in Nigeria

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
Participate in partisan politics	367	1510	4.11	.802	.643
You willing to pay your political party dues.	367	1359	3.70	1.033	1.067
You select political parties based on ideologies.	367	1277	3.48	.812	.660
You encourage people to join political parties.	367	1506	4.10	.849	.721
Valid N (listwise)	367				

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 5 shows that question 1 which sought to ascertain the extent to which party members in Nigeria ‘participate in partisan politics’ has the highest sum - which is 1510, and hence the highest mean score of 4.11. It was also revealed in the descriptive analysis that question 2 has the highest standard deviation and variance of 1.033 and 1.067 respectively, which means question 2 has the most data variations.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of campaign involvement in Nigeria

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
You partake in campaign activities.	367	1402	3.82	.947	.897
You join political rallies.	367	1448	3.95	.651	.423
You attend political conventions.	367	1279	3.49	1.168	1.365
You prefer to watch political rallies and conventions on traditional and new media.	367	1512	4.12	.808	.652
Valid N (listwise)	367				

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 6 shows that question 4 which sought to ascertain the extent to which electorates watch political rallies and conventions on traditional and new media’ has the highest sum of 1512, and mean score of 4.12. However, question 3 has the highest standard deviation and variance of 1.168 and 1.365 respectively, which means question 3 has the most data variations. This means that most citizens are involved in campaigns in Nigeria.

Table 7: Model Summary of influence of political canvassing on voting in Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.381 ^a	.145	.143	2.837

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 7 reveals that political canvassing has a weak and positive influence on voting, which is evident in the regression coefficient (R) of 0.381 and the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.145. This means that approximately 15% of the changes in voting is attributable to the influence of political canvassing, while the remaining 85% changes are due to the influence of external variables not included in the model.

Table 8: ANOVA^a of influence of political canvassing on voting in Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	498.270	1	498.270	61.920	.000 ^b
	Residual	2937.174	365	8.047		
	Total	3435.444	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Voting

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 8 shows that political canvassing significantly predicts voting in Nigeria, as indicated by the probability value of 0.000, which is less than the critical value of 0.05. Hence, political canvassing significantly predicts voting at $F(1, 365) = 61.920, p = 0.000 < 0.05, R^2 = 0.145$. From these results, it is clear that the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Table 9: Coefficients* of influence of political canvassing on voting in Nigeria

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.867	.628		15.719	.000
	Political Canvassing	.308	.039	.381	7.869	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Voting in Elections

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The unstandardized coefficients in Table 9 indicate how much the dependent variable – voting varies with the independent variable – political canvassing. As shown in the Table, before the introduction of the predictor variable - political canvassing, voting stood at 9.867, but at the introduction of the predictor variable, there is an additional unit. Specifically, as shown in the table, the intercept B_0 is 9.867, which is the predicted value of voting without the contributions of the predictor variable. That is, when political canvassing is equal to zero, retention is 9.867. However, the slope B_1 is 0.308, indicating that 1% increase in political canvassing will bring about approximately 0.31% increase in voting in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis that political canvassing does not significantly influence voting in Nigeria was rejected.

Table 10: Model Summary of influence of political canvassing on party membership in Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.630 ^a	.397	.395	2.130

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 10, which sought to determine the influence of political canvassing on party membership revealed that political canvassing has strong and positive influence on party membership, which is evident in the regression coefficient (R) of 0.630 and coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.397. This means that approximately 40% of the changes in party memberships are attributable

to the influence of political canvassing, while the remaining 60% changes are due to the influence of external variables not included in the model.

Table 11: ANOVA^a of influence of political canvassing on party membership in Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1089.006	1	1089.006	240.048	.000 ^b
	Residual	1655.865	365	4.537		
	Total	2744.872	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Party membership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 11 shows that political canvassing significantly predicts party membership in Nigeria, as indicated by the probability value of 0.000, which is less than the critical value of 0.05. Hence, political canvassing significantly predicts party membership at $F(1, 365) = 240.048$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.397$. By these results, it is clear that the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Table 12: Coefficients^a of influence of political canvassing on party membership in Nigeria

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.315	.471		17.641	.000
	Political Canvassing	.455	.029	.630	15.493	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Party Membership

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The unstandardized coefficients in Table 12 indicate how much the dependent variable – party membership varies with the independent variable – political canvassing. As shown in the table, before the introduction of the predictor variable - political canvassing, party membership stood at 8.315, but at the introduction of the predictor variable, there is an additional unit. Specifically, as shown in the table, the intercept B_0 is 8.315, which is the predicted value of joining political parties without the contributions of the predictor variable. That is, when political canvassing is equal to zero, retention is 8.315. However, the slope B_1 is 0.455, indicating that 1% increase in political canvassing will bring about approximately 0.46% increase of party membership in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis that political canvassing does not significantly influence party membership in Nigeria.

Table 13: Model Summary of influence of political canvassing on campaign involvement in Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581 ^a	.337	.336	2.166

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 13 showed that political canvassing has a moderate and positive influence on campaign involvement, evident in the regression coefficient (R) of 0.581 and coefficient of determination (R

Square) of 0.337. This implies that about 34% of the changes in campaign involvement are attributable to the influence political canvassing, while the remaining 66% changes are due to the influence of external variables not included in the model.

Table 14: ANOVA^a of influence of political canvassing on participating in political rallies in Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	871.925	1	871.925	185.930	.000 ^b
	Residual	1711.677	365	4.690		
	Total	2583.602	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Campaign involvement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Canvassing

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 14 shows that political canvassing significantly predicts campaign involvement in Nigeria, as indicated by the probability value of 0.000, which is less than the critical value of 0.05. Hence, political canvassing significantly predicts campaign involvement at $F(1, 365) = 185.930$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.337$. By these results, it is clear that the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Table 15: Coefficients^a of influence of political canvassing on campaign involvement in Nigeria

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	9.021	.479		18.824	.000
	Political Canvassing	.407	.030	.581	13.636	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Campaigns Involvement

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

As shown in the regression model in Table 15, the unstandardized coefficients indicate how much campaign involvement varies with political canvassing. As shown in the table, before the introduction of political canvassing, campaign involvement stood at 9.021, but at the introduction of the political canvassing, there is an additional unit. Specifically, as shown in the table, the intercept B_0 is 9.021, which is the predicted value of campaign involvement without the contributions of the political canvassing. That is, when political canvassing is equal to zero, retention is 9.021. However, the slope B_1 is 0.407, indicating that 1% increase in political canvassing will bring about approximately 0.41% increase in campaign involvement in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis that 'political canvassing does not significantly influence campaign involvement in Nigeria was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the influence of political canvassing on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria. The results of the empirical analyses showed that political canvassing has positive and statistically significant influence on citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria. These results are in agreement with the results of previous studies such as Elis et al. (2024) that in person canvassing has positive effect on people in treated home.

The findings also support the report that canvassers' visits increased turnout by 1.8 percentage points, candidates' had no impact on participation (Cantoni & Pons, 2020); and that political candidates increased their vote share in the precincts they canvassed, at the expense of other candidates on the list. This suggests that their failure to mobilize nonvoters resulted from focusing on securing the preferences of active voters. Nyman (2017) who studied the effect of door-to-door canvassing in the European election found that door-to-door canvassing positively influences the outcome of European election in 2014.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the large extent to which its findings support the findings of most previous studies examined, the study concluded that political canvassing significantly influence citizen participation in party politics in Nigeria. Based on the conclusion and findings, this study recommends that political parties and electoral bodies in Nigeria should adopt political canvassing to encourage citizen participation by voting, becoming a party member and been involved in campaign process.

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